BACKGROUND: On September 10, 2019, the board adopted a resolution establishing a multi-agency task force to recommend comprehensive strategies and protocols for inter-agency cooperation for the protection of students, and directed the Superintendent to convene a task force. On September 24, Superintendent Marten recommended and the board approved the following individuals to participate on the multi-agency task force:

Board Vice President Richard Barrera; Kimberly Giardina, Director, Child Welfare Services; Rickeena Boyd-Kamei, SDEA member; Nicole Crosby, Deputy City Attorney, Office of the City Attorney; Board President Dr. John Lee Evans; San Diego Police Department Captain Rich Friedman; Loxie Gant, parent; San Diego Unified School District Police Chief Mike Marquez; Dr. Rebecca Mendiola, San Diego County Office of Education Assistant Superintendent of Student Services; Bryce Pablo-Cook, student; Derby Pattengill, parent; Dr. Jolie Pickett, AASD President; Deputy District Attorney Tracy Prior; Jay Sieber, student; Dr. Suzanne Starling, Medical Director, Chadwick Center for Children and Families, Rady Children's Hospital-San Diego and Clinical Professor, Department of Pediatrics, UCSD School of Medicine; Mahogany Taylor, parent/advocate; and Charles Wilson, Senior Director, Chadwick Center for Children and Families, Rady Children's Hospital-San Diego.

RESULTS: The task force was charged with the following actions:

1. Identifying best practices among child-serving institutions locally, nationally, and internationally which have developed comprehensive inter-agency protocols and practices designed to protect children from sexual harassment and abuse.

   Action taken by the task force: On October 16, 2019 the task force held its first meeting led by facilitator Dr. Laurie Coskey. Members of the task force discussed how law enforcement and other regional agency partners can better collaborate to protect children from sexual harassment and abuse. Representatives shared their agency’s role including current practices and points of interaction in the protection of students to improve interagency collaboration. Facilitator Coskey led a discussion among task force members and their thoughts on what’s working, how we can improve cross-departmental functions and next steps. Task force members agreed that an action summit would be beneficial to further discuss how to coordinate strategies and necessary actions to create a comprehensive multi-agency protocol regarding the reporting, response, and prevention of sexual harassment and abuse of students.

2. Reviewing the district's external relationships with other agencies involved in the protection of children from sexual harassment and abuse, and comparing those efforts to the aforementioned practices.

   Action taken by the task force: At the October 16, 2019 task force meeting, regional partners gave a broad overview of their external relationships with other agencies and discussed avenues for improvement. Facilitator Coskey asked task force members to share their
thoughts on improving external relationships. Task force members agreed to explore ways to close existing gaps to improve the sharing of information among the agencies at a future action summit.

3. Recommending to the board necessary actions to create a comprehensive multi-agency cooperation protocol for the district regarding the reporting, response, and prevention of sexual harassment and abuse of district students.

Action taken by the task force: At the December 2, 2019 task force action summit we heard from the lead agencies involved in protecting children from abuse and assault including the offices of the District Attorney and City Attorney, Child Welfare Services, the County Office of Education, and the San Diego Police Department. Each agency outlined specific actions they will take to improve collaboration in the region.

- Child Welfare Services plans to increase the number of children who receive high-quality forensic interviews following an allegation of abuse, from 100 to 1,000, in the coming years. Child Welfare Services works principally with abuse that happens in the home and with students living in foster care settings.

- SDPD will provide School Police with all case disposition, as available, and present quarterly training to School Police on legal updates and best practices. SDPD also agreed to accept reports from School Police via email. Previously School Police hand delivered the reports to SDPD. This new practice will streamline the investigation process by SDPD.

- The District Attorney established the new Student Safety in School Systems Task Force and hotline to report child abuse. The agency also advocated for implementation of Electronic Suspected Child Abuse Reporting System (ESCARS). The web-based system allows for agencies to “cross-report” and share information related to suspected child abuse.

- The City Attorney will develop a public service announcement for students to understand what behavior may constitute a crime.

- The County Office of Education committed to disseminate the District Attorney’s Mandated Reporting information campaign to all county school districts.

- School Police added a child abuse reporting section on its Crime Stoppers app. In addition, school police will email reports to SDPD instead of delivering paper copies. To ensure that the response of the agencies is clear and is timely once an incident is reported from a school and/or district staff, and so that the student/family has timely communication back about the status of the situation, Chief Marquez has established a monthly roundtable with SDPD and regional partners to receive updates on all cases referred by school police to the appropriate agency.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD:
Following the action summit, district leaders met to respond to recommendations on district operations, engaging task force members and other stakeholders, principally:

- Kisha Borden, President of San Diego Education Association (SDEA)
- Rakeena Boyd-Kamei, educator and task force member
- Mahogany Taylor, Ninth District PTA President and task force member
- Zachary Patterson, 2019-20 student board member
- Bryce Pablo-Cook and Jay Sieber, student task force members
- Charles Wilson, Senior Director and Dr. Suzanne Starling, Medical Director, Center for Children and Families, Rady Children's Hospital-San Diego

Based on the above and the work of the task force, the Board of Education should consider the following recommendations.

1. Resolve that San Diego Unified should take all necessary steps to create a culture of reporting. The district should remove any question and doubts on when, where and how to report suspected child abuse and harassment and ensure that every student, parent and staff member feels protected and is informed about reporting.

2. District leaders should work with the PTA to jointly hold parent workshops beginning in May 2020.

3. District staff should update Facts for Parents materials to clarify the differing roles of SDPD and CWS in investigating allegations of abuse.

4. District staff should share the attached document with important information on reporting procedures with all staff no later than March 1, 2020.

5. District staff should partner with all bargaining units to ensure the attached flyer is properly distributed and staff is provided with sufficient training on implementation.

6. School site staff and department managers should not investigate allegations of child abuse and sexual assault/harassment of children by employees.

7. Following the conclusion of any criminal investigations, the district Office of Quality Assurance should lead any district administrative investigations.

8. District staff should immediately plan for the expanded role of Quality Assurance in the handling of abuse allegations, and report back to the Board on progress no later than July 1, 2020.

9. For all abuse cases reported to the District's Office of Quality Assurance, complainants should be informed in writing of the disposition of their case at the conclusion of the process.

10. On an annual basis, the office of quality assurance and human resources should conduct a review of any criminal convictions of district employees resulting from misconduct towards students and propose any necessary procedural changes at an open meeting of the board.
11. District should improve transparency by issuing an annual report of employee disciplinary actions.

12. The district should update administrative regulations 5141.4 and 5145.7 related to allegations of child abuse and sexual assault/harassment to clarify these procedures.

13. The district should implement additional staff training related to employee ethics and integrity, including expectations for adult interactions with students and the above administrative changes.

14. Endorse Assembly Bill 1929 on Child Abuse and Neglect Training, amending Penal and Welfare and Institutions Codes to allow internet-based reporting of child abuse and neglect by mandated reporters. The internet-based reporting tool would be in lieu of the initial phone report and the written follow up to CPS.

15. District staff should review volunteer clearance processes and employee hiring procedures to identify areas for improved identification of potentially problematic personnel.

16. District should facilitate a student-led campaign aimed at increased reporting.

17. School Police should continue to lead the monthly roundtable with San Diego Police Department and regional partners to receive updates on all cases referred by school officials to the appropriate agency. School Police should further be identified as the single point of contact for other law enforcement agencies investigating allegations of student abuse.

18. When there is an incident of abuse involving school district students and employees, the district should ensure, to the best of its jurisdictional authority, that every child who needs a forensic interview will get one, regardless of cost.

19. When a student has experienced trauma, and no other agency has primary jurisdiction over the investigation, the district should ensure the student receives support resources in a timely manner.